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Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln

By Edward A. Sumner

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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An Address

DELIVERED BEFORE THE MEN'S LEAGUE
OF THE BROADWAY TABERNACLE
CHURCH OF NEW YORK
FEB. 10TH 1902

BY
EDWARD A. SUMNER
OF THE
NEW YORK BAR

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“I have always tried to pluck up a
thistle and plant a flower, wherever
I thought a flower would grow.”

—LINCOLN.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

AS THE visitor leans upon the gallery balustrade of the National Library at Washington, that monument of beauty, that gift to their country of the best that is in American architecture and genius and art, he finds imprinted upon its walls words befitting the chaste splendor of their surroundings. And first across from his eye is this "Hither repairing other stars in their golden urns draw light."

A sentiment we may happily make our own whenever we come together once in the year upon the time named in our laws, and setting aside the care and the rush and the turmoil and the distraction of the life of the nation and of this, its teeming metropolis, may again draw hope and faith and inspiration and pride and light into the golden urns of our citizenship from that great star of the nation's dark and troublesome and Homeric days, ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

If some measure of this be taken to ourselves in the brief time of this evening; if any heart

in this audience be strengthened in his personal life, in his struggle for right citizenship and in a splendid and abiding belief in the working out of a destiny for this land of ours, for ourselves and our children after us, a destiny whose greatness it has never yet been vouchsafed mortal eye to foresee, then your speaker will count the whole object of this address accomplished.

The story of this life is a thrice told tale, but it is one where age cannot wither or custom stale its infinite variety. This is the more true if the first impressions are the vivid ones of the dawn of boyhood. Which happened to be my own good fortune. It was fully forty years ago. The September stars had begun to twinkle that night upon the then western frontier town on the Wisconsin banks of the rolling Mississippi. The evening breezes, fragrant and cool from upland bluff and prairie stretch were wafting in with that soft and velvet touch so characteristic of those early days of the plateaus of the new Northwest. Soon they bore the sound of fife and drum and then the tread of marching feet. Along the street swung a line of a hundred men, the flag at their head, and each bore his torch and wore the glazed cap and cape. There was a halt at my father's gate. He joined them. And they swung away into the darkness, singing in mighty unison to their rhythmic tread one of the great songs of the north land:

these three little ones. Left alone. Youngest and smallest of them all, Abraham peered around the rough wooden headstone, looking at him who spoke and prayed, through eyes tear-stained and filled for the first time with the great and unspeakable mystery of death, and from which was never thereafter to leave that look of mysticism and sorrow which marked the face of ABRAHAM LINCOLN like the face of an Isaiah, great prophet of his people in days of old.

And so Lincoln grew into older boyhood and young manhood in the forest home close to the very heart of nature herself. And there the thirst for knowledge came full upon him. The stronger and the deeper that there were no wells of the printed books from which he might drink. In his father's cabin were but three of these. The Bible, *Æsop's Fables* and *Pilgrim's Progress*. And so it came to pass that this boy who was a master in woodcraft, who knew the ways of the bird and of the beast, who had learned the lessons of the woodland and the forest and the stream and the hill, of the moss upon the tree and of the latter and the early rains, of the promise of the bow in the cloud, of the harvest and seed time and of all the sweet teachings of nature, found first of the books of men three of their rarest classics and in one of them the very voices of God. Fortunate indeed was that boy and fortunate the nation

over whose strange and wonderful destiny he was in later years to be called to preside.

Young Lincoln read and reread these books until he knew two of them by heart and until all had become wrought into the very fibre of his nature. They formed his beliefs and became his literary taste. These never forsook him. Out of the Fables came that fondness for and aptness in story and illustration which so characterized his whole career. Out of *Pilgrim's Progress* and the Bible came that masterful, that simple, that clear cut and exquisite Anglo-Saxon diction and style which was to rank him as one of the first of the orators of the world and which reached its acme and perfect flower in that speech upon the battlefield of Gettysburg. One of the few that was not born to ever die.

What the meagre home could not give him in books the boy walked miles to borrow from kindly neighbors, who were reckoned those days literally by miles. Thus he had from neighbor Crawford and brought home in the bosom of his hunting shirt and read a *Life of Washington*, by Weems. That evening the crude and homemade tallow dip burned down and out. The boy tucked the precious book into the log wall beside him. With the morning light he reached for it. The night's storm had blistered and soaked its every page. But only to bring straight to the fore the boy's

honor and determination, great qualities in which this boy was father to the man. For three days he bound himself to that neighbor a bondsman at the pulling of cornstalks, until he paid for and owned the half ruined, but still eagerly studied volume. No story of Lincoln is new. But wherever his life is recounted this one should be told as a memorial of him.

To such books, read anyhow and anywhere so only he could read, read between blow of axe and swing of maul at day, and by back log fire into the far night, were added Cooper's *Leather Stocking Tales* and the priceless gems of Burns and the Bard of Avon. The former, in the judgment of Lincoln's mature years, only little less great than the matchless genius of the latter. No wonder at this estimate. For the Scotch poet knew the human heart as few ever did and the American martyr sounded all the depths of its pathos, its suffering and its sorrow close to the people he loved and led through those years of terror and death.

And now there came a turn in the tide of this boy's life, strange, unlooked for, uncounted on, that bore him to the sight and the hearing of a new thing; a thing that seared his high soul forever toward it; that lifted him up as the leader of his Nation against it; that overthrew it; that made him the Emancipator; that martyred him;

that gave him high place among the Immortals forever.

Storekeeper Gentry must send a cargo of produce to New Orleans by flat boat; that lumbering, scow-like, deckless ark of primitive river days, borne with the downward current and out to the rolling drift of the mighty Mississippi. The boy knew nothing of navigation. He knew nothing of the lower Mississippi. But he did know honor to the core. And Gentry would send none other. With one companion the voyage was successfully made. And at its end ABRAHAM LINCOLN filled with the toil and poverty, but splendid freedom of his own life, had been brought face to face with human slavery, and the hopeless bondage of others.

The years took him now into young manhood's estate; the family had again set their faces to the West, and moved from the forests of Indiana to the broad prairies of Illinois. Here the hard and bitter struggle went on. Here the character was builded, chiseled in stone rough to look upon, but destined to stand fast upon the everlasting rock of justice and righteousness against the fury of all the storms of earth upon it.

There was a country store and Lincoln kept it; law books and he mastered them, and joined the circuit riders of the Bar; men destined to fame in the Republic, John Calhoun, Edward D. Baker,

Lyman Trumbull, John J. Hardin, John A. Logan, McClernard and Stephen A. Douglass; he became a soldier of the Black Hawk War; in 1832 was defeated for the Legislature; in 1834 was elected; and again in 1837; both times as a Whig. In this last Session, when to do it was a bold and dangerous thing, he, with magnificent courage, dealt his first blow in that cause with which his destiny had been so strangely linked.

Here it is:

March 3, 1837.

“Resolutions upon the subject of domestic slavery having passed both branches of the General Assembly at its present session, the undersigned hereby protest against the passage of the same.

“They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than abate its evils.

“They believe that the Congress of the United States has no power, under the Constitution, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different States.

“They believe that the Congress of the United States has the power, under the Constitution, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, but that the power ought not to be exercised, unless at the request of the people of the District.

“The difference between these opinions and those contained in the above resolutions is their reason for entering this protest.

(Signed)

“DAN STONE,

“A. LINCOLN,

“Representatives from the County of Sangamon.”

For this he became known as the Sangamon Chief; banqueted there and given these toasts which have survived from those distant days:

“Abraham Lincoln: he has fulfilled the expectations of his friends and disappointed the hopes of his enemies.”

“A. Lincoln: one of nature’s noblemen.”

These, now, were the days when discussion and event were hurrying on all over the land to the night which should flame the sky with Civil War and fill the Republic with the tread of the feet of armed men. What metal was in the soul must ring false or true.

During the Legislature of 1839 came a great debate. In the one camp was Douglass. In the other was Lincoln. To the latter was flung the taunt that his cause was hopeless and his numbers few. The flint struck deep and out flashed one of

those living sparks filled with the fire of the heart of the man. Lincoln rose and said:

“Address that argument to cowards and knaves. With the free and the brave it will affect nothing. It may be true; if it must, let it. Many free countries have lost their liberty, and ours may lose hers; but, if she shall, let it be my proudest plume, not that I was the last to desert, but that I never deserted her.”

Here again spoke honor. Here again was the lion-like courage. Here the words of the statesman farseeing, and of the man. Here once more the strong, the pure, the simple and the beautiful diction of the orator matchless. Here again the ringing call of the silver trumpet challenging defiance to the walls of the citadel of error and wrong.

In the year 1840 occurred two incidents in Lincoln's home town of Springfield, which were of lasting effect upon his character and career. With the happenings of these he stepped forever from the local stage and into that national arena, which was to mean for him fame everlasting. The State Auditor of Illinois was James Shields, able, impetuous, hot headed, a democrat and a political opponent of the rail splitter. Lincoln wrote and had printed in the *Sangamon Journal*, a letter whose pretended author was a widow. Therein she bewailed hard times and democratic rule.

And therein directed keen and satirical allusions to Shields. This politician who boasted with his other qualities a very sensitive disposition, raged through the town to discover the author. Thereupon another letter appeared from the widow offering to assuage Mr. Shields by marrying him. These productions were the talk of that section of the State. Shields demanded of the editor the name of the author. Lincoln sent word that he was responsible. Shields promptly challenged to a duel, the challenge was accepted and the tall rail splitter chose as weapons, "Cavalry broadswords of the largest size." Needless to say the duel never came off. Shields left uncontested such a field with such an opponent with such a weapon in hands and arms that had for years swung the axe and the maul in the wilderness. Lincoln explained to him that the letters were intended as political, and not personal. And the incident closed. But the man of a nation's life had learned a lesson he never forgot. With characteristic modesty and frankness he owned the mistake. Of useless personal bickering and contention and quarrel he afterwards said:

"Quarrel not at all. No man resolved to make the most of himself can spare the time for personal contention. Still less can he afford to take all the consequences, including the vitiating of his temper and the loss of self control. Yield larger

things to which you can show no more than equal right; and yield lesser ones though clearly your own. Better give your path to a dog than be bitten by him in contesting for the right. Even killing the dog would not cure the bite."

The other incident was his marriage to Miss Todd, which took place on the 4th day of November, 1840, and it gave to him a wife to whom he was devoted from that day to the end of his earthly journey. It is of interest to note here an extract from one of his letters in which he says that their living expenses were then "only four dollars a week for board and lodging."

Here again shines the utter simplicity and honesty of this man's life. Content with his help-mate to begin where they could. Content that their income should never be outlived no matter how meagre, no matter how small, no matter what sacrifice to keep within its limit.

And now the Republic was to begin to know what manner of man this was. The next period of Lincoln's life was crowded to the brim. In the victorious Harrison Log Cabin and Hard Cider campaign of 1840 he took the National stump for his party.

The Thirtieth Congress saw him representing his old Sangamon district already made famous by Douglass and Baker. His one speech there reviewing the Mexican War and attacking the

administration of Polk was by common consent a masterpiece. High praise indeed. For in that Congress in the Senate were Douglass and Davis and Benton and Calhoun and Dix and Cass and Webster; and in the house were Robert C. Winthrop, that knight errant with flashing blade from the old Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Andrew Johnson and John G. Palfrey and Caleb B. Smith and ex-President John Quincy Adams, while from the south had come Robert Toombs and Howell Cobb and Alexander H. Stevens. Mark the tribute of Stevens to this then unknown one of the West:

“He always attracted and riveted the attention of the House when he spoke. His manner of speech, as well as thought, was original. He had no model. He was a man of strong convictions and what Carlisle would have called an earnest man. He abounded in anecdote. He illustrated everything he was talking about with an anecdote, always exceedingly apt and pointed; and socially he always kept his company in a roar of laughter.”

Close upon this came “The Old Rough and Ready” campaign resulting in the election of General Taylor and remarkable for its showing of how political parties were disintegrating and new lines slowly but surely forming for the great struggle that was in the air. With the Whigs

were joined the Barn Burners, the Native Americans, Tyler's men, office-seeking Loco Focos, and, as Lincoln so characteristically put it, "all the odds and ends and the Lord knows what."

Meantime in Buffalo was born that party whose battle cry was "Free Soil, Free Labor and Free Speech;" they nominated Martin Van Buren and the Democracy nominated Lewis Cass. William H. Seward in supporting Taylor said, "Freedom and Slavery are two antagonistic elements of society in America."

Lincoln said, "I am a northern man, or rather a western Free State man, with a constituency I believe to be, and with personal feeling I know to be against the extension of Slavery." And so the storm gathered and discussion and many tongued rumor foreran. And Texas and Kansas and Nebraska were dealt with. And the line was drawn. East and West it ran. And across it and back and across again went the man whose color was black; whose status was now slave and now free and whom then the Supreme Court of the United States named and defined as human chattel.

On the 8th day of May, 1854, was finally passed through Congress the bill of Stephen A. Douglass, Senator from Illinois, organizing the two territories of Kansas and Nebraska and leaving the question of Slavery to their settlers. There was a boom of artillery on Capitol Hill in

Washington. And a burst of answering flame from the whole North. Hence arose the "Squatter Sovereignty" cry of Douglass and his supporters. And the answering shout of defiance of "Popular Sovereignty" of all who opposed. Into the debatable territory rushed settlers from the North and South with arms in their hands. And here the first blood of the struggle was shed. Douglass came home to Illinois astounded at the burst of wrath that was upon him. In Chicago where he first essayed he was not permitted to speak, but in Springfield in October came the great State Fair. And there he declared he would speak and would be heard. And there Lincoln was chosen to reply. Never was the Senator from Illinois more subtle, more crafty, more filled with guile of political expedient than on that historic day and in that historic speech. And never was such craft and such guile so answered, so revealed, so stripped of every shred of the garment of its hypocrisy, so crushed by the power of logic, so overwhelmed by tremendous array of fact and argument, so stung to its death by the merciless steel of truth and so rent and torn and dismembered by the aroused lion that was upon it, as in the masterful speech of Abraham Lincoln in answer. In one trenchant, cutting and terrible sentence that was never there-

after to go out from the memory of men, he destroyed the speech of Douglass.

"I admit that the emigrant to Kansas and Nebraska is competent to govern himself; but I deny his right to govern any other person without that person's consent."

But one thing could come from such a speech and such an answer in such a country and in such an era of its history. And that came quickly. In Bloomington, Illinois, May 29th, 1856, was organized a party in that State, whose corner stone Lincoln was appealed to for and which took the one he gave, when he said:

"Let us in building our new party make our corner stone the Declaration of Independence; let us build on this rock and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against us."

They called its name Republican, and dedicated it for freedom. Its first Presidential nominee, Fremont, the Pathfinder, was defeated. Then came the canvass for the United States Senatorship of Illinois. And those wonderful debates between Lincoln and Douglass, which for surpassing power and masterful logic and pathos and the education of a whole people in those political principles which are founded deep in the immutable and everlasting laws of the righteousness of God, have never been equalled since the world began. The times were ripe, the men were

ready, and the eyes of the world were beginning to turn toward that stage whereon the great drama was to be played. Nothing was lacking to make the occasion great and in nothing did it lack of greatness. If Lincoln's career had ended with the Senatorial election in that State, which defeated him, none the less would he have come out of these debates with a fame not soon to vanish from the minds of men. But it was not so ordained. Fate bore on until he was known as a candidate for the nomination by the Republican party for the Presidency of the United States. Early in 1860 Lincoln was invited to speak in New York at Cooper Union. His friends dreaded the test. How would the back-woodsman fare with an eastern audience of culture, of thought, of brains, and of the best that the civilization of that day could afford? But out of it came Lincoln splendidly triumphant. Disdaining, as usual, any of the tricks of oratory, in a speech simple, yet scholarly and skillfully formed, with fresh and vigorous illustration drawn direct from that Nature with which for so many years he had communed, he appealed direct to the human heart of the East and found the same quick and ready response as from the human heart of the West. In one of the strongholds itself of the refinement of the seaboard he had won a famous victory. And this was the way he closed that speech:

“Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.”

Once more the lifting of the trumpet against the walls of wrong. Once more the clear and ringing blast of defiance. Once more the courage. And, now, too, we have the outward manifestation of the characteristic of the man so wonderful among all the things that went to his make up; that far seeing; that mystic, that prophetic vision which from this period of his career to the very end so filled his every thought and every speech and every utterance. Until his countrymen came to look upon him with a reverence due the prophet and seer. And here too was another of the master springs of his character. Faith in God, faith in humanity, faith in the right that having done all, stands.

And so it came that on that June day by the free rolling waters of Michigan this man was bidden by his party to stand for the Presidency of the Union.

There amid the booming of batteries of cannon the son of Thomas Lincoln, the back-woodsman, “stepped out upon the mighty stage on

which was to be enacted one of the most tremendous tragedies the world has ever seen."

Down in Springfield town he quietly had the news and then went to his home saying: "there is a little woman on Eighth street who would like to hear about this."

Much of the time of this address has been devoted to the days that builded the character of Lincoln, because in these days it has seemed to your speaker were the well springs themselves from which we might this evening draw those many urns of inspiration.

The dreadful years that were now upon this man and which were to bow that tall, ungainly form; and seam that sorrowing face with those far away and pitying eyes, with the woe and terror and death struggle of a nation, were years indeed of his rich fruition. And yet it was but the ripening and full shaping of that which was already upon the branch when his first presidential term began. Nor is there any need to dwell long before an American audience upon the exceeding bitterness of those dark and bloody and dreadful times. The central figure of it all had said good-bye forever to his friends in the Illinois town that had known so much of his poverty and his distress. They should never see him alive again. Nor ever again indeed, his face or form, until shrouded there in the nation's woe and ready

“John Brown’s body lies a mouldering in the
grave,
But his soul goes marching on.”

And each shook aloft his torch as men knowing they were about to look upon the throes of the young Republic, for life or for death.

These were the Lincoln Wide Awakes. And the campaign was for the first election to the Presidency of the tall rail splitter of Illinois.

No truer word was ever believed or uttered than that the Lord of Hosts, who holds in his hands the nations of men, had from the first chosen and trained and ordained this man to lead this people through the terror and the struggle and the blood and the cries and the tears, with the smoke of a great cloud by day and an exceeding pillar of fire by night, yea, through the very valley of the Shadow of Death itself, of four years of Civil War.

As his fellow citizens gathered about him in this never to be forgotten struggle for the Presidency, they found a man chosen to command, tall above his fellows even as Saul of ancient and kingly days, awkward at the first in appearance, but gifted with a judgment unerring, a power of argument and logic supreme, a very simplicity and pathos itself of eloquence; with the tender heart of a woman and the lion heart of a man,

and fitted for the fiery ordeal before him as none could have been save by the life of toil and privation and hardship and poverty and rigor that had been his. Glance briefly at the moulding of it and note the perfect tempering of the instrument through the fires it passed, for the work it had to do in the hands of a great people.

The first test of this nature of ours is by deep privation and sorrow; and so it was with him.

The family had moved in the year 1818 from the wilderness of the present State of Kentucky to the wilderness of the present State of Indiana. Trial and poverty and a hand to hand fight with nature for a foothold was its daily lot.

Then sickness came and for weeks the mother, the loving and tender and caring for mother, whose sweet and womanly presence in that far off cabin of the forest had been the whole light of this boy's life, lay wasting with mortal sickness. And one night death came and she answered the call. In a rough box he helped to hew they lowered her worn form into the arms of mother earth. And ashes had returned to ashes and dust to dust and the spirit had gone to the Maker who gave it. There was a little burial service, with a few far-gathered frontier friends about. Simple words of hope and of life immortal were spoken by the travel stained and circuit riding man of God. While at the grave stood the stricken father and

for the sepulchre. On the steps at the Capitol in Washington he made to his countrymen and to the world that exquisite, that pathetic, that heart stirring plea for the Union of the land he loved. And again he wrote his own superb character in these words, to die no more:

“I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

The first inaugural address was ended. Lincoln turned to the man standing by his side, who had held his hat through that magnificent plea and his eyes met the eyes and his hand grasped the hand of Stephen A. Douglass, the little giant of Illinois. At last at one with his great political rival, this man, himself little less wonderful than Lincoln, turned his face to the West and preached with all his fire and fervor and splendid magnetism the gospel of the Union that must and should be preserved. It was the last up-blaze of a brilliant torch, for, in June the summons came and Douglass went to his long sleep.

And what faced that other there at Washing-

ton? The Treasury looted. The Navy scattered. The army small and disorganized. Officers in both branches of the service violating their oaths and swearing allegiance to the South; States in secession and more going. Senators and Representatives abandoning the Capitol and hurrying to the forming of a new government which should tear stars from the flag and take out from among its stripes. The South united and some of the North divided. Washington defenceless and threatened. Then came the shot at Sumter. The flames of it burst across the sky and the hounds of war were slipped at last from their leash.

Out there in far Wisconsin men who had borne the Wide Awake torch that night took the musket of the Iron brigade with their war eagle, Old Abe, and faced to the front; and with them sprang from every village and city and hamlet a host of armed men to see that the Union of Webster and the fathers be kept forever one and indissoluble. And Lincoln sent the call. And how the leaders rose! In Indiana, Morton; in Ohio, Dennison; in Pennsylvania, Curtin; in New York, Morgan; in Connecticut, Buckingham; in Massachusetts, Andrews; through all the north land men set their faces toward their leader with another and a new song. "We are coming Father Abraham, 300,000 strong."

Dreadful as an army with banners they

streamed to him and for four such years as the world had never looked upon their lives went out in prison pen, in Southern swamp, and on far away battlefield, till the whole land became a sepulchre of brave men. Down there in the peninsular with McClellan, up here on the banks of the Potomac at Antietam; now along the death strewn sides of Fredericksburg; now in the West at Shiloh and Vicksburg; out there with the hearts of oak of Farragut in the Bay of Mobile or passing the hell of Forts Jackson and St. Philip; now with Thomas, the magnificent, at Nashville; or with Rosencranz at dreadful Chickamauga, until when it seemed the Nation could bear no more came the death grapple over the slopes and hills of Gettysburg; the plunge with Grant into the burning fires and tangle of the Wilderness; the desperate throttle began at the bloody angle of Spottsylvania; Sheridan scourging the Shenandoah, a very god of war; Sherman loosed from all the world and swinging down from Atlanta to the sea; and then Cold Harbor and Petersburg and the last stand of the tattered ranks of gray, those fighters of the lost cause, whose splendid courage has always challenged the admiration of the army of the blue; and then Appomattox and the famous apple-tree. And what of Lincoln? What of that man upon whom all this had been laid? Ah, the infinite sorrow and

patience and tenderness and pathos of him who bore our griefs. No soldier boy of the Union, wearied to his sleep on post that would not be denied, but could look to Father Abraham, amid all the anguish of those days and months and years, and pray for the mercy that was sure to come.

"We have had blood enough," he said, "the land is filled with it; you shall not shoot one of my boys."

And when the end of it all came, what, again, of Lincoln? What of him upon whom the whole world had looked for those years? Down there in the smoking ruins of the rebel Capitol he walked alone with his boy. And upon his skirts pressed, and at his feet kneeled down the dusky people he had freed.

And now what for him was there to be? Rest and peace? Yea, rest and peace that passeth understanding. For scarce had he turned to his countrymen with these immortal words upon his lips of that second and last inaugural, "With malice towards none and with charity towards all," than the assassin's bullet did its work. And Lincoln was dead. After service so valiant and true on many a fierce and rugged field this great brand Excalibur at last had come at nightfall to the shores of that boundless and eternal sea. And there strongly wheeled it was and thrown.

“The great brand made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl’d in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea;
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur:
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish’d him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.”

And so passed our Lincoln into the sure keeping of those that die no more.

“He has gone,” says Stanton, “he belongs now to the great of all time.”

Gone but ever with us. No longer of this earth, but there among the stars of America’s noblest and best to shine with splendor and never failing light.

And if the eye of our citizenship grow dim let it here renew its youth, kindled and undazzled at the very sun itself of this man’s career.

In no fitter words can the study of this American be ended to-night than in that Battle Hymn of the Republic which was ever his favorite and whose measures, stately, grand, beautiful, tender

and prophetic are themselves so full of the life
he led and the death he died:

“Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of
the Lord,
He is trampling out the vintage where his grapes
of wrath are stored,
He hath loosed the fearful lightnings of his terrible
quick sword,
His truth is marching on.

I have seen him in the watch-fires of a hundred
circling camps,
They have builded him an altar by the evening
dews and damps,
I have read his righteous sentence by the dim and
flaring lamps,
His truth is marching on.

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows
of steel,
As ye deal with my contemnors so with you my
grace shall deal,
Let the hero born of woman crush the serpent
with his heel,
Our God is marching on.

He hath sounded forth the trumpet that shall
never call retreat,

He is sifting out the hearts of men before his
judgment seat,
Oh be swift my soul to answer him, be jubilant
my feet,
For God is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across
the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you
and me,
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make
men free,
For God is marching on."

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